

The Scuttlebutt Chronicles

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VSO Quarterly Newsletter

Volume No. 9, January, February, March 2021

Veterans Services Representative

Let me introduce you to our newest member of the Veterans Services Office Nora Smith. Nora moved to Shasta County in 2017 and began her time with the Shasta County VSO in 2019.

Nora was born in Tacoma Washington, and raised in Oregon.

Nora was an active participant in track while in high school and worked locally for businesses like A&W Root Beer and Safeway.

Nora signed up for delayed enlistment prior to her senior year in High School. She had enough credits to graduate early after completing 9 weeks of her senior year. She enlisted in what would have been the 2nd quarter of her senior year. Nora was 17 and her mom had to sign for her to enlist into the Air Force.

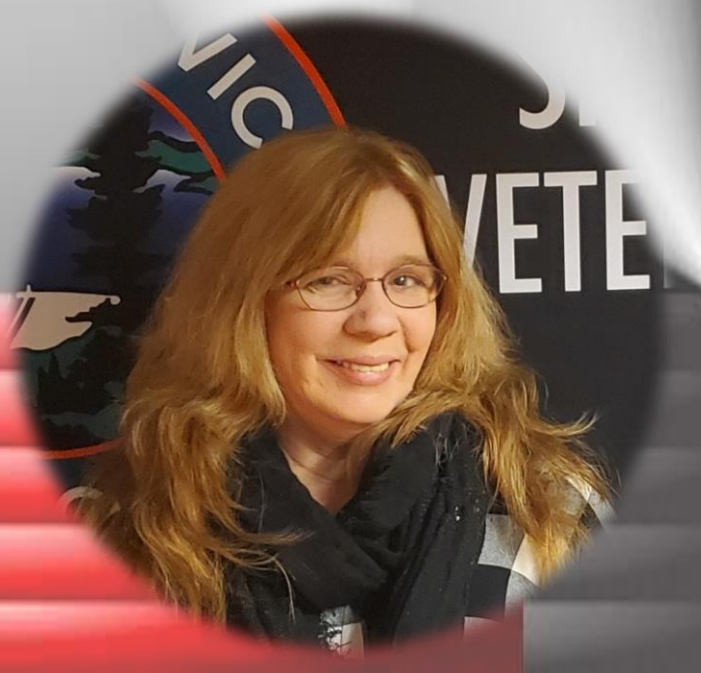
Nora's first duty assignment after basic training graduation was to K.I. Sawyer AFB in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan; then Air Defense Operations Center-Kindsbach Germany, affectionately dubbed "Kindsbach Cave". Next duty assignment Travis AFB California; then Ahlhorn Air Base, Germany; finally, to Sheppard AFB, Texas.

After the Military, Nora worked for Raytheon Aerospace for a couple of years at Sheppard AFB and then transferred over to Civil Service, also stationed at Sheppard.

Nora is married with 1 son and 2 granddaughters. Nora and her husband love to travel when they can. When she is not at work, she loves to read, binge watch Big Brother and cross stitch.

Nora Smith

Employee Spotlight



Q & A with the Veterans Services Office

Commonly asked Questions and their Answers

Q: I need to get the form to take to the DMV for “***Veteran***” on my Driver’s License. I was told I needed to go through you guys- is that true?

A: Yes! We partner with Cal Vet, therefore, the Veterans Serves Offices are the only partner that can certify that you have or meet the criteria to get this benefit. We are currently requesting that all veterans that have never been in our office, fax your original DD214 to us along with your phone number and a Veteran representative can assist you. If you have filed a claim in our office, just call and a Veterans Representative can see if you qualify for this benefit.

Q: How can I get a certified copy of my DD214?

A: As a courtesy, our office would be happy to help you order that using the form SF 180. A certified copy of the DD-214 will be mailed to you directly within a few months. We can also assist in ordering your Medical Records, Personnel Files, and any ribbons or medals lost over the years.

Q: Why should I use your office?

A: All our Veteran Representatives are Military Veterans. All our Vet Reps are fully Federal and State Accredited and hold an OGC Accreditation number. The services we provide are free to veterans and their dependences.

Q: What benefits do I qualify for as a veteran?

A: There are many factors to consider. Era Served, Time in Service, Type of Discharge and if you are service connected with a disability with the VA. Those are the 4 most basic factors in evaluating benefit qualifications.

Q: What is the difference between Pension and Aid and Attendance. Can I get Aid and Attendance by itself?

A: You must first qualify for Pension and Aid and Attendance is a special stipend and an extra benefit. No, you can not get Aid and Attendance as a stand alone benefit. Please call our office for further information 530-225-5616.

Feel free to email questions to vso@co.shasta.ca.us

During the Purple Tier- The Shasta County Veterans Services Office **LOBBY ONLY** is closed to the public

What does this mean:

We are still HERE- Working diligently for our Veterans and their families.
We are utilizing- Faxing, Telephone, Vet Pro finger Ink (e-signatures) and of course the U.S Mail

You are welcome to call the front desk Monday – Friday 530-225-5616 Option #2 for questions and inquires
Once we are back into the **RED** or **Orange** Tier- we will re-open our lobby

	Widespread Tier 1*	Substantial Tier 2*	Moderate Tier 3*	Minimal Tier 4*
Hair salons	Open	Open	Open	Open
Retail	Max 25% capacity	Max 50% capacity	Open	Open
Shopping centers	Max 25% capacity, closed common areas, closed food courts	Max 50% capacity, closed common areas, reduced capacity food courts	Open; Closed common areas, reduced capacity food courts	Open; reduced capacity food courts
Personal care services	Open	Open	Open	Open
Museums, zoos and aquariums	Outdoor only	Max 25% capacity Indoors	Max 50% capacity Indoors	Open
Places of worship	Outdoor only	Max 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer	Max 50% capacity or 200 people, whichever is fewer	Max 50% capacity
Movie theaters	Outdoor only	Max 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer	Max 50% capacity or 200 people, whichever is fewer	Max 50% capacity
Hotels and lodging	Open; fitness centers outdoors only; no saunas or steam rooms	Open; plus fitness centers at 10% capacity	Open; plus fitness centers at 25% capacity and indoor pools	Open; plus fitness centers at 50% capacity and spa facilities
Gyms and fitness centers	Outdoor only	Max 10% capacity, plus climbing walls. Indoor pools, hot tubs, saunas and steam rooms must close	Max 25% capacity, plus indoor pools and climbing walls. Indoor hot tubs, saunas and steam rooms must close	Max 50% capacity, plus indoor pools, hot tubs, saunas, steam rooms and climbing walls
Restaurants	Outdoor only	Max 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer	Max 50% capacity or 200 people, whichever is fewer	Max 50% capacity
Wineries	Outdoor only	Outdoor only	Max 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer	Max 50% capacity or 200 people, whichever is fewer
Bars, breweries and distilleries with no meal	Closed	Closed	Outdoors only	Max 50% capacity
Family entertainment centers	Outdoor only; kart racing, miniature golf, batting cages	Outdoor only; kart racing, miniature golf, batting cages	Indoors for naturally distanced activities, max 25% capacity (bowling alleys, climbing walls, escape rooms)	Indoors for activities with increased risk of proximity and mixing, max 50% capacity (arcade games, ice and roller skating, indoor playgrounds)
Cardrooms, satellite wagering	Outdoor only	Outdoor only	Max 25% capacity	Max 50% capacity
Offices	Remote	Remote	Encourage telework	Encourage telework
Professional sports	No live audiences	No live audiences	Permanent venues with live audiences outdoor only, maximum 20% capacity, reservations required, assigned seating only, in-seat concessions only, regional attendees only (within 120 miles)	Permanent venues with live audiences outdoor only, maximum 25% capacity, reservations required, assigned seating only, in-seat concessions only, regional attendees only (within 120 miles)

* All activities require modifications, which are detailed at [covid19.ca.gov](https://www.covid19.ca.gov). Activities are allowed indoors unless otherwise noted.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

FAQ ABOUT HOMELESS VETERANS

Who are homeless veterans?

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) states that the nation's homeless veterans are predominantly male, with roughly 9% being female. The majority are single; live in urban areas; and suffer from mental illness, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders. About 11% of the adult homeless population are veterans.

Roughly 45% of all homeless veterans are African American or Hispanic, despite only accounting for 10.4% and 3.4% of the U.S. veteran population, respectively.

Homeless veterans are younger on average than the total veteran population.

Approximately 9% are between the ages of 18 and 30, and 41% are between the ages of 31 and 50. Conversely, only 5% of all veterans are between the ages of 18 and 30, and less than 23% are between 31 and 50.

America's homeless veterans have served in World War II, the Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam War, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, Persian Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq (OEF/OIF), and the military's anti-drug cultivation efforts in South America. Nearly half of homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era. Two-thirds served our country for at least three years, and one-third were stationed in a war zone.

About 1.4 million other veterans, meanwhile, are considered at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.

How many homeless veterans are there?

Although flawless counts are impossible to come by – the transient nature of homeless populations presents a major difficulty – the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that **40,056 veterans are homeless on any given night.**

Approximately 12,700 veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation New Dawn (OND) were homeless in 2010. The number of young homeless veterans is increasing, but only constitutes 8.8% of the overall homeless veteran population.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

FAQ ABOUT HOMELESS VETERANS

Why are veterans homeless?

In addition to the complex set of factors influencing all homelessness – extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income and access to health care – a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse, which are compounded by a lack of family and social support networks. Additionally, military occupations and training are not always transferable to the civilian workforce, placing some veterans at a disadvantage when competing for employment.

A top priority for homeless veterans is secure, safe, clean housing that offers a supportive environment free of drugs and alcohol.

Doesn't VA take care of homeless veterans?

To a certain extent, yes. Each year, VA's specialized homelessness programs provide **health care to almost 150,000 homeless veterans** and other services to more than 112,000 veterans. Additionally, more than 40,000 homeless veterans receive compensation or pension benefits each month.

Since 1987, VA's programs for homeless veterans have emphasized collaboration with such community service providers to help expand services to more veterans in crisis. VA, using its own resources or in partnerships with others, has secured nearly 15,000 residential rehabilitative and transitional beds and more than 30,000 permanent beds for homeless veterans throughout the nation. These partnerships are credited with reducing the number of homeless veterans by 70% since 2005. More information about VA homeless programs and initiatives can be found [here](#).

Incarcerated Veterans

Numbers and profiles:

- There were an **estimated 140,000 veterans held in state and federal prisons**. State prisons held 127,500 of these veterans, and federal prisons held 12,500.
- Male veterans were half as likely as other men to be held in prison (630 prisoners per 100,000 veterans, compared to 1,390 prisoners per 100,000 non-veteran U.S. residents). This gap had been increasing since the 1980s.

http://nchv.org/index.php/news/media/background_and_statistics/

Disabled Veteran License Plate 2021

Beginning January 1, 2021, qualifying disabled veterans will have an easier process to follow when requesting special Disabled Veteran license plates from the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Last month Governor Gavin Newsom signed a law requiring the DMV to accept a summary of benefits letter in lieu of the normal PCGL letter. This letter is issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs- BUT the Veterans Services Office can obtain this letter for you!

This provides qualifying disabled veterans more convenient options to obtaining their disability certificates for Disabled Veterans plates from the DMV.

Disabled veterans can obtain the plates free of charge for one of the following: A passenger vehicle, a motorcycle or a commercial vehicle with an unladen weight of 8,000 pounds or less not used for transportation, hire or profit, according to the DMV.

Call our office to speak with a representative!

530-225-5616 Option #2



Am I eligible for Veterans Pension Benefits?

You may be eligible for the Veterans Pension program if you meet the requirements listed below.

Both of these must be true:

You didn't receive a dishonorable discharge, **and**
Your yearly family income and net worth meet certain limits set by Congress. Your net worth includes all personal property you own (except your house, your car, and most home furnishings), minus any debt you owe. Your net worth includes the net worth of your spouse.

And at least one of these must be true about your service. You:

Started on active duty before September 8, 1980, and you served at least 90 days on active duty with at least 1 day during wartime, **or**
Started on active duty as an enlisted person after September 7, 1980, and served at least 24 months or the full period for which you were called or ordered to active duty (with some exceptions) with at least 1 day during wartime, **or**
Were an officer and started on active duty after October 16, 1981, and you hadn't previously served on active duty for at least 24 months

And at least one of these must be true. You:

Are at least 65 years old, **or**
Have a permanent and total disability, **or**
Are a patient in a nursing home for long-term care because of a disability, **or** Are getting Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income

VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits provide monthly payments **added** to the amount of a monthly VA pension for qualified Veterans and survivors.

If you need help with **daily activities** like bathing, transfer, cooking, feeding yourself or dressing or you're housebound and can no longer drive or your too disabled to do the shopping, get to the doctor or pick up for prescriptions then call the Veterans Services Office to see if you qualify. **530-225-5616 Option #2**
We look forward to assisting you and answering any questions you may have.



HR BILL 7105

Section 2001; changes the beginning date for Vietnam Era to 11/01/1955 in Title 38 **Section 101(29)(A)**

Section 2004; changes VA life insurance beginning 01/01/2023 in the following manner:

Only offer a Whole Life Insurance Plan

Extends application age for VA insurance to age 81 or submission of SC Disability prior to age 8

Amount of Insurance is expanded to \$10K, \$20K, \$30K, or \$40k

Insurance premiums and Insurance benefits are paid into a Department of Treasury account

Implement a 2-year waiting period before insurance is paid

Premiums can increase over time

Sunset of all other types of VA insurance

Veterans can elect to transfer into the Whole Life plan, but will have the 2-year waiting period prior to payment of insurance

No new applications for VA Supplemental Life Insurance after 12/31/2022

Section 2006; Mandates VBA to post all DBQs on their public website

Requires VBA report to Congress if DBQs need to be replaced with another system/process

Section 2007; requires VBA establish a minimum dollar amount of debt before VBA reports the debt to a credit agency

Section 2008; Allows Veterans to remove any dependent from their benefit award using EBenefits

Requires VBA to complete this change NLT 60 days after submission

Section 2011; submit a report to Congress covering the adjudication and treatment for the manifestation of certain Agent Orange conditions and any cost associated with these conditions

Section 2101; Expands eligibility for VA Home loans to individuals serving in the Reserve by reduce amount of service time required

Section 4101; establish presumptive period for COVID 19 to the first year post-service for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

Section 4102; make available grant money to organizations that provide legal services to homeless veterans

Section 5001; Improve access to VHA for Women Veterans

Establish "Office of Women's Health"

Establish annual report to Congress on Women's Health

Section 5102; prioritizes retrofitting of VHA Mental Health facilities to support Women's Mental Health

Section 5105; provide legal services to Women Veterans

Section 5106; report to Congress on supportive services provided to Very Low Income Women Veterans

Section 5107; provide assistance for childcare to certain Veterans receiving VHA medical care

Section 5111; expand VHA Mental Health services to Guard and Reserves

Section 5201-5206; improve staff training concerning Women Veteran treatment

Section 5301 – 5305; reduce/eliminate harassment and assault

Section 5501; improve VBA evaluation process of Mental Health claims as a result of MST

Section 5502; allows the veteran's choice of the C&P examiner's sex on PTSD/Mental Health claims resulting from MST

Section 7004; expands employment/reemployment of Guard Members

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

<https://sba.thehartford.com/business-management/small-biz-owner/new-stimulus-act/>

1. The Employee Retention Tax Credit has been expanded.

The Employee Retention Tax Credit has been extended to July 1, 2021. The credit rate was increased from 50 percent to 70 percent of qualified wages and the eligibility for the credit was extended by reducing the required year-over-year gross receipts decline from 50 percent to 20 percent and provides a safe harbor allowing employers to use prior quarter gross receipts to determine eligibility. In addition, the limit on per-employee creditable wages was increased from \$10,000 for the year to \$10,000 for each quarter.

The Employee Retention Tax Credit:

- Increases the 100-employee delineation for determining the relevant qualified wage base to employers with 500 or fewer employees
- Allows certain public instrumentalities to claim the credit.
- Removes the 30-day wage limitation, allowing employers to, for example, claim the credit for bonus pay to essential workers.
- Allows businesses with 500 or fewer employees to advance the credit at any point during the quarter based on wages paid in the same quarter in a previous year.
- Provides rules to allow new employers who were not in existence for all or part of 2019 to be able to claim the credit.
- Clarifies the determination of gross receipts for certain tax exempt organizations.
- Clarifies that group health plan expenses can be considered qualified wages even when no other wages are paid to the employee, consistent with IRS guidance.
- Provides that employers who receive Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans may still qualify for the ERTC with respect to wages that are not paid for with forgiven PPP proceeds.

ACTION: This is a giant tax credit that you can take advantage of if your business has been affected by COVID-19.

2. Deferral of social security taxes has been extended.

You can now defer your employer's share of social security taxes through March 2021 and pay those amounts back as late as the end of 2022.

ACTION: Extending these payments doesn't relieve you of your obligations, but it does provide an interest free loan from the government. Talk to your accountant.

3. You can take advantage of the Employee Retention Tax Credit through 2026.

This credit, which can be up to \$9,600 and can be applied against the taxes you owe if you hire certain long term unemployed workers, those on welfare and veterans has been extended for five years.

ACTION: This is another big tax credit for hiring a new employee. It will continue for another five years. Again, talk to your accountant about taking advantage of this before you make any new hires.

4. If you're a nonprofit then you can get more donations.

The above-the-line charitable contribution is extended through 2021 at \$600 for those married filing jointly and \$300 for other filers. This means taxpayers will be able to take the standard deduction and deduct up to \$600 in charitable giving when calculating their taxable income. For the 2020 tax year, taxpayers could deduct up to \$300 above-the-line for charitable contributions.

ACTION: This is a perk that every nonprofit should be using in their 2021 marketing.

Did you know?

HONOR GUARD AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN

1. How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why?

21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.

2. How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?

21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1.

3. Why are his gloves wet?

His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.

4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time, and if not, why not?

He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face, and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.

5. How often are the guards changed?

Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.

6. What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?

For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30."

Other requirements of the Guard:

They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, or on-base or off-base in housing of their choosing.

After, they are not referred to as former Tomb Guards, they are Tomb Guards who no longer walk." Since Jan. 7, 1958 only 500 identification badges have been awarded. It is believed that the Tomb Guard Identification Badge is the second least awarded badge in the United States Army second only to the Astronaut badge.

Any soldier wishing to become a sentinel must undergo rigorous training, including several hours a day of marching, rifle drill and uniform preparation, and every tomb sentinel is expected to be completely versed in the history of both the tomb and of Arlington National Cemetery (including knowing how to find the graves of all the prominent person buried in the cemetery), they don't necessarily have a lot of free time to devote to recreational activities.

Among the notables are: President Taft, President John F. Kennedy, Joe Louis (the boxer-by approval of Ronald Reagan), and Medal of Honor recipient Audie Murphy (the most decorated soldier of WWII) Soldier, Actor, Song Writer and Rancher.

Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.



ARLINGTON
NATIONAL CEMETERY
HONOR • REMEMBER • EXPLORE

VSO 2020 COVID-19 WONT STOP US!

STILL HERE- STILL WORKING FOR OUR VETERANS

Our Numbers for year 2020:

- Filed total of **890** Federal Legal Claims to the VBA resulting in in over **\$4.3 M in retroactive payment to veterans;**
- **\$594,256** in monthly payments;
- **\$130,598** in Lump sum payments for reimbursements for burial and payments for vocational rehab and accrued benefits.

Not bad for a COVID year!

Calendar Reminders:

January- MLK Birthday

February – Valentines, and Presidents Day

March – Saint Patrick's Day, Women's History Month, Woman Veteran Awareness Month, TBI Awareness Month, International Woman's Day on the 8th, & National Vietnam War Veterans Day on the 29th

The VSO speaks on **Carl Bott-KCNR-** on the last Wednesday of each month @ 8am!

1460am or 96.5fm

Please feel free to submit subject matter ideas you would like her to address at

vso@co.shasta.co.us

VSO 2020

Covid 19 wont Stop US!



**VSO NEW Remains Officer
Fred Loveland**



Zogg Fire Relief LAC



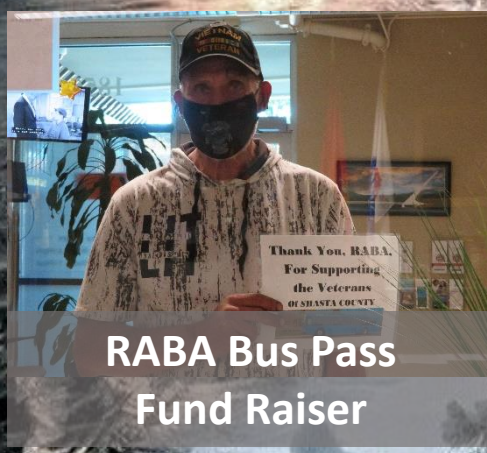
Fraud Fair 2020



Accreditations



**Veterans 100th Bday
Drive thru**



**RABA Bus Pass
Fund Raiser**



**Korean War
Chapter 1
Mask Give
Away**



**Honoring Veterans of
Shasta County**

Red Wine Beef Stew

Ingredients:

2 ½ pounds beef chuck roast cut into one and a half inch chunks.
2 onions diced
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 cloves garlic pressed or finely minced
1 tablespoon fresh thyme
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary chopped
1-2 bay leaves
1 cup red wine such as Syrah or Zinfandel
3 cups beef stock
1/4 cup flour
1 Yukon gold potato cut into 1 inch cubes
2 carrots cut into 1/2 inch coins
kosher salt
fresh ground black pepper
chopped fresh parsley for garnish optional

For The Topping:

1 cup pearl onions or cipollini onions
2-3 carrots cut into 1 inch pieces
8 cremini mushrooms thickly sliced
2 slices of bacon cut into 1 inch lardons

Instructions

Preheat oven to 325°F

Heat 3 tablespoons of olive oil in a Dutch oven over medium high heat. Add onions and season with kosher salt. Cook, stirring often, until golden brown, about 20 minutes.

Add tomato paste and garlic, cook, stirring constantly for about 2 minutes, until rust colored.

Add flour and stir, cooking for about 1 minute.

Whisk in broth slowly, **then wine**.

Add herbs and bay leaves and bring to a simmer, about 3 minutes.

Stir in beef and return to a simmer.

Transfer to oven and cook, uncovered for 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Remove from oven and using a spoon, scrape down the brown bits that have formed on the side of the pot. Add the potatoes and carrots to the stew, stir and rearrange meat so that it is on top of the vegetables and sticking out of the sauce as much as possible (this way it will brown in the oven)

Return to oven and cook uncovered for another hour or until potatoes and carrots are tender.

While stew is cooking, prepare topping.

In a medium sauté pan, add just enough water to cover the bottom of the pan.

Add bacon pieces, cover pan and turn heat on to medium high. Bring to a boil.

When water is boiling, remove lid and add pearl onions and carrots. Cook, stirring often, until water has evaporated.

Add mushrooms and reduce heat to medium low.

Cook, stirring often, until vegetables are nicely browned, 20-30 minutes. Depending on how much fat your bacon releases, you may need to add just a little olive oil to the pan to coat the vegetables.

When stew is done, remove from oven, stir and again scrape browned bits from the sides into the stew.

Taste stew and season with salt and pepper if needed.

To serve, spoon stew into bowl and top with some vegetable topping and fresh parsley, if desired.

Serve with bread (optional, but strongly advised).

*Bon
Appetit!*

This Year

Hang onto your truth
and respect the truth of others

Choose to be happy

Forgive those that
you can forgive
and seek the forgiveness of
someone who deserves it

Do something outside
of your comfort zone

Be the voice for someone
who has no voice

Be quiet strength

Be the type of kindness
that is strength

Remember that love
is a verb

Choose healthy foods,
activities, and people

Fall six times,
get up seven,
persevere

Wish people a lovely day

Live honestly, truly,
and with integrity

Shasta County

Veteran Services Office

Office: 530-225-5616 Option #2

Visit our webpage for printable checklists.

vso@co.shasta.ca.us

The Veterans Services Office wants to wish everyone a Wonderful and Safe 2021

REMINDER: We are still HERE- Working diligently for our Veterans and their families.
We are utilizing- Faxing, Telephone, Vet Pro finger Ink (e-signatures) and of course the U.S Mail

You are welcome to call the front desk Monday – Friday 530-225-5616 Option #2 for questions and inquiries



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